

# *Du'ā*

## The Weapon of the Believer

*A treatise on the status and etiquette of du'ā in Islām*

Abu Ammaar Yasir Qadhi

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وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ  
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ  
دَاخِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

And your Lord has stated: Make *du' ā* to Me, I will (of a surety) respond to you. Verily, those who are too arrogant to worship Me will enter the Fire of Hell, humiliated.

Sūrah Ghāfir, 60

*Du' ā* is (the essence of) worship.

Prophetic ḥadith

*Du' ā and the seeking of protection from Allāh are like weapons, but the sharpness of a weapon is not sufficient for it to cause effect, for the person that handles it also plays a role. So whenever the weapon is a perfect one, having no flaw in it, and the forearm is strong, and there are no preventing factors, then it will cause an effect on the enemy...*

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah

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I request the reader to notify me if he comes across any mistakes in this work, or has any other constructive advice that he wishes to give.<sup>8</sup> In the end, perfection is only with Allāh!

On a personal note: this book was written at a time when I myself was undergoing a great personal crisis. It was a time when I myself was turning to Allāh, making *du'ā* constantly and earnestly for a miracle to occur to save me from the situation that I was in. And it was while I was writing the final pages of this book, sitting in front of my computer, that a phone call from an absolutely unexpected source came, informing me that, indeed, a miracle had occurred; and for Allāh all matters are easy, for He only has to say, '*Kun*,' and it is! Verily, all praise is due to Allāh, Who hears the plea of the one in distress, Who responds to the *du'ā* of the one who has been wronged, and Who grants justice to all.

So I hope that the following pages do not contain mere facts; dry quotes that do not stir sentiment and feeling. Rather, I pray that some of the *emotion* and *spirit* that was present while this book was being written can be felt by the reader as he turns its pages, and that he can *feel* the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah speak directly to his heart as he reads its lines. I pray that this work will help the reader come closer to Allāh, by realising his own great poverty and helplessness, and by appreciating the Beneficence and Power of the *Rahmān*, the *Rahīm*.

**Abu Ammaar Yasir Qadhi**

*Al-Madīnah al-Nabawīyyah* - The City of the Prophet (ﷺ)

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<sup>8</sup> Comments may be sent care of the publisher, or e-mailed directly to the author at: yqadhi@hotmail.com

## THE BASICS

### 1. The Meaning of *Du'ā*

The word '*du'ā*' is the verbal noun (*maṣḍar*) of the verb '*da'ā*', which signifies 'to call out, to summon.'<sup>9</sup>

The word '*du'ā*' is mentioned in the Qur'ān to signify a number of meanings, as the following verses show:

#### 1. Worship.

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ

"And do not call besides Allāh that which will not harm you or benefit you..."<sup>10</sup>

#### 2. The seeking of aid.

وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

"And call upon your witnesses besides Allāh..."<sup>11</sup>

#### 3. A request.

ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

"And call upon Me, for I will answer your prayers..."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-Arab*, 14/258. Also see Hans-Wher, p. 282.

<sup>10</sup> Sūrah *Yūnus*, 106.

<sup>11</sup> Sūrah *al-Baqarah*, 23.

<sup>12</sup> Sūrah *Ghāfir*, 60.

4. A call.

يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ

“The day that He will call you...”<sup>13</sup>

5. Praise.

قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ

“Say, ‘Call upon Allāh, or call upon *al-Raḥmān*...”<sup>14</sup>

6. Speech.

دَعْوَتُهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَنَكَ اللَّهُمَّ

“Their speech therein will be: ‘Glory be to you, O Allāh!’”<sup>15</sup>

7. A question.

ادْعُ لِنَارِكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ

“Call on your Lord so that He can clarify to us what it is...”<sup>16</sup>

And other meanings besides these.

As for its Islamic meaning, various scholars have defined it in similar terms.

Al-Khaṭṭabī said: “The meaning of *du‘ā* is the servant’s asking his Lord for His Help, and asking His continued support. Its essence is that a person shows his neediness to Allāh, and frees himself from any power or ability to change (any matter by himself). This characteristic is the mark of servitude, and in it is the feeling of human submissiveness. *Du‘ā* also carries the meaning of praising Allāh, and attributing to Him Generosity and Bounteousness.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Sūrah *al-Isrā’*, 52.

<sup>14</sup> Sūrah *al-Isrā’*, 110.

<sup>15</sup> Sūrah *Yūnus*, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Sūrah *al-Baqarah*, 68.

<sup>17</sup> *Sha’n ad-Du‘ā*, p. 4.

Ibn al-Qayyim defined it as, “Asking what is of benefit to the person, and asking the removal of what is harming him, or (asking) the repelling of it (before it afflicts him)”.<sup>18</sup>

Another scholar wrote: “The appeal to Allāh, all Glory be to Him, of a request, by asking Him with desire for all good that is with Him, and to be submissive to Him in asking what is desired and in obtaining what is hoped for.”<sup>19</sup>

## 2. *Du‘ā* is a Form of Worship

Allāh, all Glory and Praise be to Him, has said:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ  
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ  
دَاخِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

Verily, your Lord has said: “Call upon Me, and I will answer you!” Those who are arrogant to worship Allāh will enter Hell, humiliated!<sup>20</sup>

In this verse, Allāh has commanded us to ask Him and petition Him, and counted those who do not ask Him among those who are too arrogant to worship Allāh. From this, it is understood that *du‘ā* is among the acts of worship, and this meaning was explicitly stated by the Prophet (ﷺ). Nu’mān ibn Bashīr reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“*Du‘ā* is worship”.

He (ﷺ) then recited the verse:

<sup>18</sup> *Badā’i al-Fawā’id*, 3/2.

<sup>19</sup> This definition is taken from *Kitāb al-Du‘ā* by Dr. Muḥammad al-Sayed Ṭanṭāwī.

<sup>20</sup> Sūrah *Ghāfir*, 60.

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ  
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دَاخِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

“Verily, your Lord has said: “Call upon Me, and I will answer you!” Those who are (too) arrogant to worship Allāh will enter Hell, humiliated!”<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, *du‘ā* is a type of worship; rather, it is amongst the greatest acts of worship, and one of the best ways to bring a worshipper closer to Allāh, all Glory and Praise be to Him. In this verse, Allāh has equated *du‘ā* with worship, for He commanded His servants to make *du‘ā* to Him, and then stated that whoever is too arrogant to *worship* Him will enter the Fire of Hell. So from this it is understood that the worship referred to in this verse actually means *du‘ā*.

In another verse, Allāh calls *du‘ā* the ‘*dīn*’ or the entire religion, for He says:

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ

He is the *Ḥayy* (Ever-Living), there is no deity except Him. So make *du‘ā* to Him, to Him is the *dīn*.<sup>22</sup>

And there is no other act that has been equated or paralleled with the entire *dīn*, or connected to the entire concept of worship (*‘ibādah*).

One of the benefits that are obtained by realising that *du‘ā* is a form of worship is that the manner and procedure of *du‘ā* must only be taken from the Qur’ān and Sunnah. Just as a person cannot use his mind or whims to decide how to pray or fast, so too must he restrain himself to the texts of the Qur’ān and Sunnah when it comes to the manner and etiquette of *du‘ā*.

<sup>21</sup> This ḥadīth is authentic, and is reported by Aḥmad and the four *Sunans*, and others, from Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr, as reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘* # 3407.

<sup>22</sup> Sūrah *Ghāfir*, 65.

### 3. *Du‘ā* and its Relationship to ‘*Aqīdah*’

*Du‘ā* has a very strong relationship with one’s ‘*aqīdah*’ (creed) and *tawḥīd*.<sup>23</sup> *Du‘ā* is also one of the best ways that a person can increase his *īmān* (faith), and appreciate Allāh’s Names and Attributes. It is a powerful reminder of man’s inherent incapability, and Allāh’s unlimited powers.

*Du‘ā* increases a person’s *īmān* (faith) due to many factors. It makes evident the fact that a person has absolutely no control over his destiny, nor does he have the power to benefit himself or avert any evil from him. It shows the neediness that a Muslim feels towards his Lord. It proves that the one making *du‘ā* sincerely believes that Allāh hears his *du‘ā*, and will respond to it. Such a person must also affirm Allāh’s Infinite Mercy, Beneficence and Generosity. And the more a person increases in the realisation of his poverty towards the Mercy of his Lord, the more he will increase in his *īmān* as well. Likewise, the more a person appreciates and realizes the perfection of Allāh’s Names and Attributes, so too will he increase in his *īmān*. These two factors – knowing one’s need of Allāh in every matter, and knowing Allāh’s Perfect Nature – are the essence of *īmān* and servitude to Allāh.

The one making *du‘ā* openly affirms his *īmān* for Allāh, for it shows that he believes in Allāh, and that Allāh, and only Allāh, can listen and answer his prayers.

Another way in which the importance of *du‘ā* can be demonstrated is by showing that *du‘ā* is an implicit affirmation of *tawḥīd* in all of its aspects.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> This topic will only be briefly touched upon in this book. The reader is referred to the master’s dissertation by al-Arūsī on the topic.

<sup>24</sup> *Tawḥīd* is the Unification of Allāh in His Existence and Lordship (known as *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah*), in His Perfect Essence and Attributes (*Tawḥīd al-Asmā’ wa l-Ṣifāt*), and in His right to be worshipped (*Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah*). *Tawḥīd* is the *essence* of Islām, and the first and final call of all of Allāh’s prophets. The reader is referred to Dr. Bilāl Philip’s *Fundamentals of Tawḥīd* (al-Hidaayah Publishing & Distribution, United Kingdom, 1999), for further details.